

Message Text

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SUBJECT: FISHING BAN: CANADIAN WEST COAST IMPACT

REF: DAY - LUPPI TELCON OF JUNE 21

1. THERE IS NO PRESENT SERIOUS IMPACT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA RESULTING FROM THE RECIPROCAL U.S.-CANADIAN FISHING BAN. AFTER A SPATE OF FRONTPAGE HEADLINES, NEWS REPORTS AND ANALYSES, AND EDITORIALS IN THE FIRST DAYS OF JUNE, LOCAL MEDIA INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT HAS DROPPED TO ALMOST ZERO. THE PREVAILING OPINION IS THAT THERE IS "NO WAR", THAT THERE LL BE "NO CASUALTIES", AND THAT CANADIAN FISHERMEN WILL BENEFIT IN THE LONG RUN FROM THE GOC'S ACTION BECAUSE IT WILL PUT GREATER PRESSURE ON THE U.S. TO BARGAIN SERIOUSLY ON FISHING RIGHTS.

2. WEST COAST FISHERMEN, SOME OF WHOM MAY LOSE ECONOMICALLY WHILE OTHERS GAIN, DEPENDING ON THEIR ABILITY TO ADJUST FROM TRADITIONAL FISHING GROUNDS TO NEW AREAS, ARE UNLIKELY TO COMPLAIN OPENLY WHEN THEIR POWERFUL AND MILITANT UNION (UFAWU) HAS PUBLICLY LAUDED THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT S ACTION. IN FACT, THE UFAWU TAKES FULL CREDIT FOR THE GOC MOVE.

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3. ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS REPORTS, WHILE WEST COAST SALMON FISHERMEN ARE BEING DENIED ACCESS TO A U.S. AREA WHICH THEY ESTIMATE CAN YIELD DOLS 6 TO 8 MILLION IN A SEASON, THEY MAY RECOUP WITH THE REOPENING OF THE SWIFTSURE BANK WHICH HAD BEEN CLOSED RELUCTANTLY AT U.S. INSISTENCE. FURTHERMORE, CANADIAN FISHERMEN HERE ANTICIPATE LESS COMPETITION FOR BOTTOM FISH, SUCH AS COD, OF WHICH U.S.

FISHERMEN TOOK AN ESTIMATED DOLS 3 MILLION IN 1977. CANADIANS ALSO EXPECT MORE SHRIMP CATCHES FROM THE MAIN TOFINO GROUNDS AREA, ALTHOUGH THIS IS EXPECTED TO BE A VERY POOR YEAR WITH A CATCH PERHAPS AS LOW AS DOLS 500,000. CANADIAN HALIBUT FISHERMEN, ON THE OTHER HAND, WERE GREATLY RELIEVED THAT THE U.S. BAN DID NOT EXTEND TO THE ALASKA HALIBUT FISHERY WHICH IS WORTH SOME DOLS 10 MILLION TO THEM.

4. ACCORDING TO A LOCAL FEDERAL FISHERIES OFFICER, THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE AT THIS TIME OF ANY SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC HARDSHIP ON THE WEST COAST, ONLY "INCONVENIENCE" AS SOME FISHERMEN MUST LEARN TO ADJUST TO NEW FISHING AREAS. HE ADDED THAT IT IS PROBABLY TOO EARLY TO ACCURATELY JUDGE THE IMPACT SINCE MUCH OF THE FISHING SEASON STILL LIES AHEAD. THIS VIEW WAS ECHOED BY A PROVINCIAL FISHERIES OFFICER AS WELL.

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